

2005 Census of Medical Examiner and Coroner Offices

AGENCY: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice

ACTION: Notice of Solicitations

SUMMARY: The purpose of this notice is to announce a public solicitation to obtain a data collection agent for the 2005 Census of Medical Examiner and Coroner Offices.

DATES: Proposals must be submitted to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) on or before 5:00 p.m. EST, November 29, 2004 through the Office of Justice Programs Grants Management System (GMS).

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATIONS: The Office of Justice Programs (OJP) requires that funding applications be submitted through the OJP Grants Management System (GMS). Using an established Internet account, go to www.ojp.usdoj.gov/fundopps.htm.

INFORMATION CONTACT: For a copy of the survey instrument or any other information contact, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 810 Seventh Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20531; Phone (202) 305-9088; Lynn Bauer Email: lynn.bauer@usdoj.gov or Matthew Hickman (202) 353-1631; Email: matthew.hickman@usdoj.gov.

AUTHORITY: 42 U.S.C. 3732.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Program Goals

The purpose of this award is to provide funding to administer the 2005 Census of Medical Examiner and Coroner Offices. The census will obtain information about the personnel, functions, and needs of State, district, and county medical examiner, coroner, and mixed systems in the United States. An additional goal will be to collect agency-level data on the number of unidentified remains held within each system. A draft census data collection instrument and preliminary respondent list (approximately 3,200 respondents) will be provided by BJS. BJS anticipates making one award of up to \$500,000 for an 18-month period under this solicitation. The funding of this project is subject to the availability of funds.

Background

The 2005 Census of Medical Examiner and Coroner Offices is the first data collection effort by the Bureau of Justice Statistics to focus on the medico-legal investigation of deaths. Information collected will cover agency personnel, expenditures, functions, workload, and needs. Findings from the Census will provide a broad picture of the current state of medico-legal investigation in the U.S. Representative datasets and statistical reports from other censuses administered by BJS are available on the BJS website at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs.

Eligibility Requirements

Both profit-making and nonprofit organizations may apply for funds. Consistent with OJP fiscal requirements, however, no fees may be charged against the project by profit-making organizations.

Scope of Work

The objective of this project is to complete data collection for the 2005 Census of Medical Examiner and Coroner Offices. This includes extensive follow-up, data verification, data entry, and delivery of a final data set and documentation. The census data collection instrument and preliminary respondent list will be provided by BJS. BJS will obtain OMB clearance for this data collection under the Paperwork Reduction Act.

The data collection agent will have routine contact with the respondents and must be knowledgeable about the content of the survey instrument. (Note: Including instructions and respondent contact information, the survey instrument is approximately 4 pages long.) Specifically, the recipient of funds will:

1. Develop a detailed timetable for each task in the project. Data collection should begin within one month of the project start date and be completed in twelve months or less.

After the BJS project manager has agreed to the timetable, all work must be completed as scheduled.

2. Verify and update (as needed) the names, addresses, and appropriate contact information from the respondent list provided by BJS.
3. Mail surveys to respondents and provide extensive follow-up to respondents that require assistance, clarification, or encouragement to complete the survey. This may involve multiple follow-up telephone calls, re-mailing or re-faxing surveys, and e-mail correspondence.
4. Create and maintain a user-friendly web site by which respondents can submit their data. Electronic submission will be the preferred method of response, and respondents should be encouraged to use this method.
5. Implement and maintain an automated web-based system to provide ongoing status of each survey respondent, complete documentation, and an inventory of follow-up communication and procedures for each case. Respondents' method of response (website, mail, fax, or phone) shall be included in this system. This automated tracking system should remain current and accessible to the BJS project monitor at all times.
6. Deliver to BJS electronic versions of the survey data, and documentation on diskette and in ASCII file format. Survey documentation should include, but is not limited to, a comprehensive codebook detailing variable positions, data coding, variable and value labels, any recoding implemented during the data cleaning process, methods used for dealing with missing data, and copies of all program code used to generate data or published statistics. All data and documentation from this survey may be posted on the BJS website, and the data will be archived at the BJS-sponsored National Archive of Criminal Justice Data, operated by the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR).

Award Procedures and Evaluation Criteria

Proposals should describe the plan and implementation strategies outlined in the Scope of Work. Information on staffing levels and qualifications should be included for each task and descriptions of experience relevant to the project. Resumes of the proposed project director and key staff should be submitted with the proposal.

Applications will be reviewed competitively with the final award decision made by the Director of BJS. The applicant will be evaluated on the basis of:

1. Content of the proposal and how it addresses the tasks in the Scope of Work.
2. Demonstrated knowledge of applied survey research, including survey construction, interview techniques, data collection, data coding, entry and verification, and the production of public-use data files. This includes availability of an adequate computing

environment, knowledge of standard social science data processing software, and demonstrated ability to produce SPSS readable data files for analysis and report production.

3. Demonstrated ability and experience in collecting data from a large number of criminal-justice related agencies or similar entities.
4. Demonstrated fiscal, management, staff, and organizational capacity to provide sound management for this project. Applicant should include detailed staff resources and other costs by project tasks.

Performance Measures

To ensure compliance with the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), Public Law 103-62, this solicitation notifies applicants that they are required to provide performance data which are used to measure the results of this data collection, as well as contribute to the achievements of BJS's overall statistical program. BJS's mission is to produce and disseminate accurate, objective, and independent national statistics. OJP/BJS is responsible for measuring the relevance, utility, and accessibility of its information by the following outcomes: 1) demand for statistical data, and 2) utilization of data.

The grantee will be responsible for the following:

1. Recipient must achieve a 98% or better survey response rate. This data collection is a comprehensive census so this high response rate is a necessity.
2. Recipient must achieve a minimum 99% survey item response rate on function items, overall personnel items, facility items, a minimum 95% response rate on detailed personnel items, and a minimum 90% response rate on budget items.
3. Recipient must conduct data entry validation checks that result in an effective error rate low enough that follow-up by BJS is required for no more than 1% of all respondents.
4. All project requirements must be completed within 1 year of project start date, with monthly progress reports to be provided to BJS that provide evidence of consistent advancement toward meeting the performance measures outlined above.
5. Provide BJS with a clean dataset and documentation for public use.

Application Requirements

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP) now requires that funding applications be submitted through the OJP Grants Management System (GMS). Access through the Internet to this online application system will expedite and streamline the receipt, review,

and processing of funding requests. Applications will only be accepted through the GMS online application system.

To learn how to begin the online application process, please refer to the Quick-Start Guide to using the Office of Justice Programs' Online Grants Management System (GMS). A toll-free telephone number (1-888-549-9901) has been established to provide applicants with technical assistance.

When applying for Federal funding, applicants must provide the following:

Applicant Information

Type of applicant
Employer Identification Number (EIN)
Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number
Organization unit
Legal jurisdiction name
Address
Contact person and phone number

Project Information

Title of project
Areas affected by project
Proposed project period of performance
Estimated funding request
Congressional District

Attachment 1 - Budget detail worksheet and budget narrative. The detailed budget includes salaries of staff involved in the project and the portion of those salaries to be paid from the award, fringe benefits paid to each staff person, travel costs, supplies required for the project, sub-contractual agreements, and other allowable costs (an example of a Budget Detail Worksheet is available online at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/forms/budget.pdf.)

Attachment 2 - Project Narrative. The project narrative should describe activities as discussed in the Scope of Work and address the evaluation criteria. The project narrative should contain a detailed time line for project activities, a description of the survey methodology to be used including defined geographic boundaries, data collection method, data entry, and data documentation procedures.

Attachment 3 - Other Program Requirements (Key staff information, Privacy Certification, and Human Subjects Protection Certification of Compliance). Information on key staff includes a staff loading chart, by task and contract year, showing the role and number of hours (per year) committed for proposed staff; identification of proposed key personnel and their qualifications for the significant functions in this project, along with concise descriptions of the duties each will perform under the grant; and an identification by name of all key personnel with decision making authority.

The **Privacy Certificate** is a certification of compliance with Federal regulation relating to the confidentiality of information identifiable to a private person collection for research and statistical purposes. It includes a description of procedures to be followed to protect identifiable data. (A model certificate is located at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/bjsmpc.pdf.)

The **Human Subjects Protection Certification of Compliance** is a certification of compliance with Federal regulation relating to research and statistical projects to ensure the protection of human subjects against undue and unnecessary risks. (A model certificate is located at www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/bjssspshs.pdf.)

Assurances. The applicant must comply with the assurances in order to receive Federal funds under this program. It is the responsibility of the recipient of Federal funds to fully understand and comply with these requirements. Failure to comply may result in withholding of funds, termination of the award, or other sanctions.

Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension, and Other Responsibility Matters; and Drug-Free Workplace. Applicants are required to review and check off the box on the certification form included in their online application process. This form commits the applicant to compliance with the certification requirements under 28 CFR Part 69, "New Restrictions on Lobbying," and 28 CFR Part 67, "A Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-procurement) and Government-wide Requirements for a Drug-Free Workplace (Grants)."

Please note that it is critical that the name, address, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address of the authorizing official are correct on these online forms.

October 25, 2004

Lawrence A. Greenfeld
Director
Bureau of Justice Statistics